



THE LIGHT POST

AUGUST, 2021



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--|----------|
| THE ACWRTQ | 1 |
| MEMBER CARE | 1 |
| LEADERSHIP: IMPORTANCE OF HAVING STRONG LEADERS | 3 |
| CWRT CONGRESS 4 CONFERENCE – SUSTAINABILITY | 4 |
| CWRT CONGRESS 5 CONFERENCE AGENDA | 5 |
| FOLLOW US ON THE WEB! | 6 |
| CWRT CONGRESS BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 6 |

THE AMERICAN CWRT QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

By Dr. Jack Ford and Robert Taylor and The Light Post

Civil War interest groups in Australia have been around since the 1950s, albeit small and fleeting. The first official and longest surviving CWRT was the American Civil War Research Group of Australia, formed in 1961, located in Melbourne, and served all of Australia. The American Civil War Round Table of Australia formed in 1972. But when four fellows from Brisbane (which is 17 hours away from Melbourne) met in 1998, they decided to create their own CWRT – the American Civil War Round Table of Queensland (Qld.), Australia (ACWRTQ). Below is a discussion with Dr. Jack Ford, President of the ACWRTQ, and Mr. Robert Taylor, editor of their remarkable journal *The Bugle*.



TLP: Let's start with Australia's involvement in the American Civil War. One way Australia benefitted from the war was in 1861 when Beenleigh's plantations produced and sold cotton to England which was suffering a shortage caused by the Union blockade. What other ways was Australia affected by the war?

Taylor: Cotton production

proved to be a disaster in Queensland and while it made an initial impact, the climate and harsh conditions along with crop pests saw the industry collapse. Interestingly, Australia kidnapped unsuspecting Kanaka people, those living in Vanuatu and as far away as Fiji, and forced them to work as slaves to harvest cotton. It

Continued on Page 2

MEMBER CARE: CELEBRATING MEMBERS' LIVES

By Carol VanOrnum



Richard Tenan—Wayne County CWRT

Member care is more important today than ever before within Civil War round tables. As with many organizations, unless you belong to 4H, members are aging into their 60s, 70s, and 80s. Aside from the efforts our round tables are making to draw in new and younger members, we must face reality that we're all on the same

train.

I used to work for a company that served wealthy clientele. We actually employed a Director of Nurturing. She brought that extra bit of care to both clients and fellow employees. And so it should be with round tables.

Jerry Payn recently sent out an email to members of the Wayne County (OH) CWRT of

the tragic passing of member Rick Tenan in "a horrible car accident." He shared, "You might recall Rick reenacting a Confederate Sharpshooter - Jack Hinson (who lived in Bubbling Springs, TN). Rick had a replica made of "Jack's" rifle, which is most impressive! Rick and Pam visited the area in Tennessee where "Jack" had lived and he had a fascinating

Continued on Page 6

THE AMERICAN CWRT QUEENSLAND (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

was a disgraceful episode in Australia's history. Pirates established kidnap gangs to raid unsuspecting islanders and many died in the process. Eventually the government had to act and they sent out a ship with inspectors to ensure that only volunteers were taken and then under contract conditions. Who should they choose to be the inspector but Richard William Curtis, a former paymaster on board CSS Georgia and CSS Stonewall. A Confederate, nonetheless.

Ford: British law forbade Australians enlisting in foreign wars so they joined up under false names. Being so far away meant that current newspaper reports of the war did not reach here for weeks. Still, it was big news here.

TLP: Some of your founding, past and current members are descendants of actual Civil War soldiers, e.g., US expatriate Ed Best who is a descendant of Private John C. Babb of Company A, 44th Georgia Volunteer Infantry Regiment. How many members do you currently have and what percentage of them are US expatriates versus Australian citizens?

Taylor: In Queensland we have a member, Aidan Smith, whose great grandfather fought for the Union in the Missouri militia, James Latimer. I researched James' story and discovered an extraordinary man with connections to the explorer John Charles Fremont.

Ford: Membership is now just 20. Like many types of clubs, we are finding it hard to attract young members, who will participate in our activities. Percentage = 0, as

all 'expats' returned to the U.S. before 2020. They have made invaluable contributions. Trace Scalf taught us ACW regulations drill, derived from his living history participation, before coming here. Dressmaker Wendi Best made our uniforms from grey, Australian army blankets.

TLP: The ACWRTQ seems to be a full-service Civil War Round Table. Not only are research and discussion a priority in your organization, gravesite recognition, reenactments and living history and displays are also a part. What aspect of your organization do your members favor the most? What do you find draws in new members?

Taylor: For myself I favored the living history aspects where we took our organization out to the public. But when we had august speakers like the late Ed Bearss our lecture nights were the most popular and enjoyable. For Ed we had a military band playing civil war tunes while we socialized. Pure heaven. I think the public venues were the most successful means of attracting members. It is hoped that *The Bugle* distribution may encourage some to join.

Ford: Activities have reduced due to COVID and an aging membership. Our Co. 'A', 44th Georgia Infantry Regt. is now defunct, due to falling membership. Our focus is now on research, which is published in "*THE BUGLE*", or with guest speakers at our monthly meetings.

TLP: What aspect of the Civil War do your Australian members find most interesting?

Taylor: Our group was fairly

evenly divided, one half into reenactors doing the sleep on the ground hard yards of military life, shooting and camping. The other half mainly comprised of we older folk who contented ourselves with regular meetings, discussions, and the odd public event where we tried to raise public awareness.

Ford: Any aspect is of interest BUT, we particularly seek links between Australia and the ACW (e.g. veterans who migrated to Australia and are buried here).

TLP: It seems at the time that there was, and still is, a Confederate predilection, e.g., the 42 Australian volunteers who joined the Confederate Navy, the quest to find the gravesites of Confederate soldiers and apply identifying plaques, the 44th Georgia reenactments. Am I correct?

Taylor: Certainly we have a large number, such as myself and Jack, who are predisposed to favor Southern history. This may come more from the fact that history has been so distorted into goodies and baddies that we are compelled to look into the Southern aspect more than the North. That does not imply a political bias and is one I have often wrestled with. There were terrible injustices on both sides but it serves no good purpose to focus only on the bad element of one side. This has allowed those in society who are poorly educated to behave in beastly fashion to one side or the other. Destruction of statues and memorials and the desecration of graves is anathema to me. In the next issue of *The Bugle* I mention that after the war the soldiers came together at reunions

much like our reenactments, shook hands and laughed together. It seems to me people who lived it were far more forgiving than people today who lack compassion for the fallen soldier. They seem to have forgotten they were Americans all.

Ford: Yes and No. Our state of Queensland was labelled "Australia's Deep South" in the 1970s, due to its 32 years of ultra-conservative government. So, after Ed Best formed our Georgia Regt living history section, it became a running joke that we Queenslanders were pro-South and our southern Australian states were pro-North (e.g. with their 62nd New York Regt group). The ACWRTQ encourages interest in both sides, thus the majority of graves in Australia are of Union veterans. Only one Confederate has been found, buried in Queensland, so far. Hence the majority of the ACWRTQ's grave rededication ceremonies have been for Federals.

TLP: Your round table has developed a relationship with the Louisville (KY) Civil War Round Table. Tell me more about that relationship.

Taylor: I find it more an information sharing relationship, i.e., I can research for you as much as you can provide me with data. It's a pretty good arrangement. Any contact is healthy and broadens our appreciation of the war.

Ford: I think that Robert began the relationship, c2006, with an exchange of CWRT newsletters. Lowell Griffith, of the LCWRT, was always a great supporter of fostering the ongoing exchange of ACW information.

LEADERSHIP: THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING STRONG LEADERS

By Carol VanOrnum

Remember the Titans is one of my favorite movies. I love the scene (and chuckle) when the runners come upon a “supposed” Gettysburg cemetery in the early morning hours. Tidbits of wisdom, like the line, “Attitude reflects leadership... captain,” underscore the universal need for engaged leadership in any organization. How does your CWRT rate? Do you have vibrant, enthusiastic leadership? Are there empty positions?

Many round tables struggle to recruit members who want to

Engagement Reflects Leadership

make the effort and are willing to do the work of managing a round table. Without that willingness and enthusiasm, you’ve got a lackluster organization.

Tom Williams of the Cincinnati CWRT shared his worries in a plea to its members: We need more contributing writers for our newsletter. We need a vice president. We need someone who can maintain our Face-

book page. Despite a steadily growing membership, he admits that “not enough folks are willing to step forward and accept a leadership role.” Tom continued, “As a group that studies military history, the lack of leadership causing a problem should be a no-brainer; we should all know, this will soon spell disaster.”

I turned to the largest CWRT in the country, the Brunswick (NC) CWRT, for answers. According to Director E. Gifford Stack, the man to ask is co-founder and Advisor Wally Rueckel. “He is very good at finding folks who didn’t realize they were qualified to be a BCWRT volunteer!!! said Gifford. The BCWRT currently has a president, two vice presidents, secretary, and treasurer – all of whom are directors, plus four more directors and 10 advisors. During the presidencies of Rueckel and Mike Powell, and upon approval by the BCWRT Board, changes were implemented to create what the BCWRT is today. A 2017 interview of former president Mike Powell by Chris Mackowski of the *Emerging Civil War* explained their process. Most BCWRT board members came up through the **advisory** ranks. There are no term limits for anyone. Directors are re-elected annually but can stay in position until an advisor wishes to move up the ranks. This allows for a smooth and willing transition from advisor

to director within the structure of a nomination and majority-approval process. Advisors have no vote and are encouraged but not required to attend board meetings. Powell explained that advisors are key to the organization’s success. They each have a specific talent that is drawn upon. They have expertise in something, be it contact with historians, liaisons with other boards of museums, historical societies, etc. These resources prove to be a valuable tool. But they’re not everything.

The **Board** must create a strong link with **volunteers**, who are sought out for special talents, skills and experience. Board members create a call list to talk to members. They thank them for joining and ask how they enjoyed the meeting. They get feedback. And then they close: We need volunteers. Are you interested? What can you do? Wally always closes by saying, “Tell me what you can

do, and I’ll tell you what you can do for us.” He adds, “Never send an email – call them or talk face-to-face.” He’s learned that people who attend meetings are more likely to be the best choices for volunteers. Additionally, the Board advertises for specific jobs – either before their meeting on a scrolling screen or in their newsletter *Call to Arms*. Volunteers are also thanked numerous times via the newsletter and at meetings.

A 2010 Brigham Young University study showed that social connections – with friends, family, neighbors or colleagues – improve your odds of survival by 50 percent. If you aren’t serving on a board or volunteering, you are shortchanging yourself and others. A board and volunteers working together engage its members, and the rewards will manifest a successful and strong round table. Engagement reflects leadership.



Kennesaw Mountain. Photo by Stuart Harder, Twin Cities CWRT



**IMPROVEMENT
THROUGH
EDUCATION AND
NETWORKING**

2021 CWRT CONGRESS CONFERENCE – SUSTAINABILITY!

By Mike Movius

The CWRT Congress is now accepting registrations for its fall 2021 in-person conference. The conference will be held September 17-19, 2021, at Camden County College in Blackwood, New Jersey, near Philadelphia. Early-bird registration runs through July 31, with general admission to run from August 1st through September 10. Registration is open at <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/2021-congress.html>

**CWRT Congress
Conference**

Sept. 17-19, 2021

Philadelphia

Through previous conferences, we learned a number of important things. First, is how important it is to know beforehand the workshop preferences of registrants. As a result, at the 2021 conference we are pre-registering for workshops and designing them as learning, participating and doing experiences.

Second, there are many

things that we could discuss about the Civil War era. But few of them have to do with CWRT organization and development. So, although we offer historical tour options on Sunday, the real focus will be on inspiring leaders to make their CWRT sustainable. For example, in the past, we have had a reception with a Civil War historian as our speaker. We have had great speakers like Chris Mackowski and Curt Fields. This year, our reception will be about getting to know one another and some of the challenges your CWRT is facing. Think of it as ICE-BREAKER 450. I think you're going to like what we have in store.

Third, conceptually, we have divided the conference into two halves. The first half will be about bringing forward some of the important topics everyone is facing...membership decline and how to operate given the reluctance of some members to attend in-person meetings. We will also be talking about some organizations and programs your CWRT can participate in to enhance your standing in the community. Think of it as setting up a larger tent.

The second half is all about developing the attitude, direction and skills to operate inside that larger tent. For example, creating marketing videos might seem too esoteric for some CWRTs. But, if your organization is interested in attracting younger members, how are you intending to do that? Placing meeting notices in the local newspaper surely isn't as effective as that medium is struggling for readership.

The millennial audience is much more likely to watch a short video and be inspired to find out more. In that light, creating videos can become the best way to reach your target audience.

And what kind of predictive indicators is your CWRT using to decide which videos or other marketing projects are working well? If your crystal ball is like mine, it looks great, but there is no magic coming forth from it. You need to understand data, how to collect it, analyze it and use it to achieve your goals. So, that is the basis of our CWRT Data workshop.

Yes, it really is all about sustainability!!

Lastly, we are taking a large step in making this a premier CWRT event. At our first conference, we did not hold a dinner after the day-long session. The following years we had dinner, but it was more or less an afterthought. This year, we will not only have dinner at one of the best local restaurants, but we will also have a program that includes entertainment by the Libby Prison Minstrels, an awards ceremony and a drawing for winners of our first-ever raffle.

Finally, a word about COVID-19. We have all heard the words to describe the pandemic we are crawling out from under... unprecedented, devastating, horrific, etc. The CWRT Congress not only wants your CWRT to thrive, but we need you to survive too. We struggled about making the decision to hold the conference and then how we would protect our staff, the host volunteers and every attendee. We landed on the best solution available... requiring proof of vaccinations of everyone involved. We understand that some will be put off by that and we are prepared to own that reaction. Your lives are so much more important to us than to endanger anyone at a conference. We know you understand and respect our decision, as we respect your decisions.

So, the battle cry of CWRT Congress this year has become, "On to Blackwood"!!!!



2021 CWRT CONGRESS CONFERENCE

2021 SATURDAY AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 18, 2021

| TIME | ACTIVITY | PERFORMED BY |
|--|--|---|
| 7:30 am | REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN | Carol VanOrnum & Old Baldy CWRT |
| GATHERING & NETWORKING | | |
| 8:15 - 8:20 | CONFERENCE OPENING & WELCOME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag Ceremony Introductions – Board & Advisors | Mike Movius CWRT Congress |
| 8:20 - 8:25 | HOST CWRT WELCOME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce OBCWRT staff Housekeeping | Rich Jankowski Old Baldy CWRT |
| 8:25 - 8:40 | MASTER OF CEREMONIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest introductions | Chris Mackowski Emerging Civil War |
| 8:40 - 9:10 | NATIONAL HISTORY DAY | Rich Rosenthal North Jersey CWRT |
| 9:20 - 9:50 | HISTORICAL COMMISSIONS | Kim Brace Bull Run CWRT |
| BREAK (15 MINUTES) | | |
| 10:05 - 10:35 | RECRUITING YOUNGER MEMBERS | Mary Koik American Battlefield Trust |
| 10:40 - 11:10 | CWRTs & THE NEW NORMAL | Rich Jankowski Old Baldy CWRT |
| LUNCH & NETWORKING (50 MINUTES) | | |
| 12:20 - 1:20 | CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSIONS #1 | |
| | Organizing a CWRT Board | |
| | Writing a Press Release | |
| | CWRT Marketing | |
| TRANSITION (15 MINUTES) | | |
| 1:35 - 2:35 | CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSIONS #2 | |
| | Newsletter Improvement | |
| | Mission Statements | |
| | CWRT Data-Driven Decisions | |
| BREAK & TRANSITION (25 MINUTES) | | |
| 3:00 - 4:00 | CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSIONS #3 | |
| | Creating Marketing Videos | |
| | Meaningful Partnerships | |
| | Member Retention | |
| TRANSITION (15 MINUTES) | | |
| 4:15 - 5:00 | ANNUAL REPORT, CHALLENGE & WRAP | Mike Movius CWRT Congress |

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TELL US

If your round table has a unique situation or is successful in any way, please share with us. Contact Carol VanOrnum

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Rosemary Nichols, Capital District CWRT

Ted Savas, Savas Beatie Publishers



Antietam. Photo by Stuart Harder, Twin Cities CWRT

MEMBER CARE: CELEBRATING MEMBERS' LIVES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

story about the Hinsons! They have been regulars at our WC CWRT meetings and did their program for us a few years ago. They also have been regulars for our May CW History Day in the Wooster Library and the Smithville H.S. CW Day in June. Rick is sure to be missed..." The details of Rick Tenan's contribution to their round table shows what a valuable asset he was and how much he was appreciated.

In the April Brunswick CWRT newsletter *Call to Arms*, they share the sad "passing of Cindy Powell, wife of Mike Powell, our immediate past President. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Mike, and his and Cindy's families." And in the March issue of *Call to Arms* an entire page was dedicated to honoring Max Williams. E. Gifford Stack, Director and editor of the newsletter, shared Max's dedication to making the round table such a success. He spoke of his Civil War knowledge, his

"infectious ability to share this history," his "wonderful laugh, a marvelous sense of humor." Stack's article made the reader really understand their loss.

The extra care that is shown when sharing and honoring members who have passed can be heard as a heartfelt voice of appreciation for our most valuable assets, our members.